

RARE MEETING WITH

"Council on State Governments Justice Center, Inc."

by Timothy J. Muise

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On Tuesday, August 23, 2016, I was blessed to be part of a select and very small group of men here at MCI Norfolk who were able to meet with representatives of The Council on State Governments Justice Center which is conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the entire criminal justice system here in the Commonwealth. It was refreshing to see that this organization recognizes the need to include the voice of the informed prisoner in this process. Kudos to them.

I covered topics concerning the aging prisoner population and the need for a compassionate medical release vehicle as well as for commutation of sentence for terminally ill prisoners, the need to change the "guard culture" and employ a system of real accountability under the supervision of a citizens advisory committee, the problem of suicide in the Massachusetts state prison system resulting from the "hopelessness" that permeates the current system, and the new DOC P.E.S. Program which denies prisoners of their constitutionally protected right to due process by imposing disciplinary sanctions for the refusal to engage in a voluntary program. Some other areas were covered, and I used my usual assertive approach, and the members of the Council took copious notes.

A DOC representative was present, who worked directly for the DOC director of program services Chris Mitchell, and I could not resist the opportunity to put her boss out there about his misinformation and lack of honesty when it comes to the P.E.S. Program, Self-Improvement Groups, and community access to prisoners and prisoner groups.

This is what we do here, myself and the Lifers' Group, Inc.: we do all within our power to expose the failures of the system and attempt to play an effective role in the advancement of public safety. Our critics, and there are not too many, would rather have us taking drugs, joining gangs, planning future crime, and making ourselves "prisoners", but we have chosen a different path. It is what it is.

More To Come...

T H E   N O R F O L K   C H R O N I C L E S